

# Chapter 1

## **The Church: Understanding what it is!**

In Christianity, the term "church" typically refers to the community or assembly of believers. It can be used in a broad sense to denote all Christians worldwide, often referred to as the "universal church." Additionally, it can refer to local congregations or denominations.

### **The people, the believers:**

The believers make up what is called the church. So when we talk about the church, we are referring to the people and not the property or the programme. We know that the church is the people, the believers who come into the building to worship and serve the Lord, yet some of the church leaders most times, act as if the church is the big auditorium!

We give so much attention to the building, the beautification and maintenance of the physical structure so that the 'church' can be comfortable in the building! We spend so

## **Growing A Healthy Church**

much resources in putting up and maintaining the physical infrastructure and making it very comfortable to host the church, yet we do not give sufficient attention or invest sufficient resources into the spiritual health of the 'real church'. A simple test is to check the annual financial account of the church and do a brief comparison of what is spent on the spiritual growth and development of the people compared to what is spent on physical infrastructure. We need to give equal, if not more attention to the real church than the physical building! When we talk about the healthy church, we are actually referring to the spiritually healthy people who worship God in the building.

## **The Body of Christ:**

The Church is the body of Christ while Christ is the head. When the body and the head comes together, they form a single unit. The central coordination centre of the whole body is resident in the head. It is here that decisions, instructions, directions, preservations, etc. for the entire body are all initiated. For example, the human body is programmed to take direction from the head, and every part of the body, no matter how far it is from the head has a direct or remote connection to the head for it to be able to receive signals.

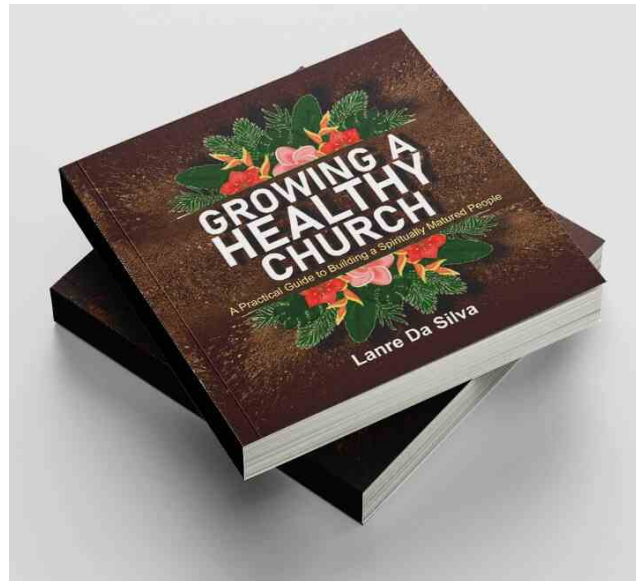
It is the same thing with the body of Christ, every member of the Church must take directives from the head, meaning that it must go in the direction of the head, do only what the head wants and reject what the head has rejected or abhorred. Every action or inaction must be in total sync with the head, if not, it is not the body of Christ. The implication is that there must be conformity in all areas between Christ and the believers for the group of believers to be qualified to be called a church. That is why the believers are called Christians; Christ-like. The believers' life must reflect Christ in all areas. There are so many organizations that are referred to as "church", but in the real sense of it, they are not because everything about them is not in sync with Christ.

It should however be noted that not all believers are walking and living in the direction of Christ, especially new believers who are just being engrafted or integrated into the body of Christ. There are also old believers who have refused to be fully engrafted into the

### **The Church: Understanding what it is!**

body of Christ, they are poking out like sore thumbs from the body. It requires the process of discipleship to help them become more and more integrated into the body of Christ so that they can be more like Christ. This process of progressive engraftment into the body of Christ is an indication of spiritual growth and development.

Sometimes, physical engraftment process in human or plants fails because of several reasons, that may include: immunological mismatch or non-adherence to medications amongst so many others. In the same vein, the engraftment of new believers into the body of Christ may fail because they may refuse to let go, some old lifestyles or characters that are not in consonance with the new light they have received in Christ: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" Ephesians 5:8. This process of engraftment is the process of discipleship. It may not however happen effectively and correctly without the help of a more mature believer.



For more information on how to order a copy of the book, please visit  
<https://thechurchhealth.com>